

Message Text

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17

ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SAJ-01

EB-07 OFA-01 DLOS-04 COME-00 TRSE-00 ACDA-10 IO-11

SAL-01 CG-00 OMB-01 DOTE-00 /105 W

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R 251604Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6074

INFO COMICEDEFOR

CINCLANT

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY HELSINKI

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USMISSION NATO

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 0270

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT ECON EFIS IC

SUBJECT: GOVERNMENT TURNS BACK NO-CONFIDENCE MOTION

1. TO SURPRISE OF NO ONE, MOTION OF NO CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT WAS DEFEATED YESTERDAY IN ALTHING BY STRAIGHT PARTY-LINE VOTE OF 41-18. (ONE COALITION MP WAS ABSENT). MOTION, WHICH ITSELF STIPULATED NO SPECIFIC GROUNDS FOR LACK OF CONFIDENCE, HAD BEEN INTRODUCED JOINTLY BY LEADERS OF ALL THREE OPPOSITION PARTIES.

2. VOTE FOLLOWED PARLIAMENTARY DEBATE PREVIOUS NIGHT WHICH HAD BEEN BROADCAST ON STATE RADIO. PEOPLES ALLIANCE MP'S MAINLY ATTACKED GOVERNMENT FOR ALLEGED WEAKNESS AND IRRESOLUTENESS IN ECONOMIC MATTERS AND IN FISHERIES DISPUTE. PA SPOKESMEN CITED DETERIORATING ECONOMIC SITUATION, ESPECIALLY DROP IN PURCHASING POWER THAT HAD FORCED UNIONS TO STRIKE IN ORDER TO SEEK REDRESS.

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SIMILARLY, IT WAS CHARGED, COALITION'S FISHERIES POLICY WAS ONE

OF DISCORD AND HESITANCY AS EVIDENCED BY DELAY IN BREAKING
REWATIONS WITH UK. ORGANIZATION OF LIBERALS AND LEFTISTS AND SDP
JOINED PA IN CRITICIZING ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE BUT WERE LESS
OUTSPOKEN ON FISHERIES MATTER. SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC LEADERS PUT MOST
STRESS ON WHAT THEY SAW AS MORAL DECLINE IN COUNTRY WITH CLEAR -- IF
INEXPLICIT -- REFERENCE TO COVER-UP CHARGES LODGED PREVIOUSLY
AGAINST JUSTICE MINISTER OLAFUR JOHANNESSEN (REYKJAVIK 154).

3. PRIMEMIN HALLGRIMSSON, SPEAKING FOR COALITION, CRITICIZED
OPPOSITION FOR IRRESPONSIBILITY IN SEEKING TO DEMONSTRATE LACK
OF CONFIDENCE IN GOVERNMENT AT TIMES OF SERIOUS PROBLEMS BOTH
INTERNALLY AND EXTERNALLY. HE DEFENDED COALITION'S ECONOMIC RECORD,
NOTING PROGRESS IN REDUCING INFLATION RATE AND BALANCE OF TRADE
DEFICIT. ON FISHERIES ISSUE, PRIMEMIN REJECTED PEOPLES ALLIANCE
DEMANDS FOR FURTHER TOUGH MEASURES SUCH AS WITHDRAWAL FROM NATO,
NOTING THAT DEFENSE INTERESTS ALONE SHOULD DETERMINE NATO PARTICI-
PATION AND THAT PA WANTED TO GET ICELAND OUT OF NATO UNDER ANY
CIRCUMSTANCES. HALLGRIMSSON ADDED THAT GOI POLICY IN FISHERIES
MATTER WOULD NOW REVOLVE AROUND DEVELOPING SUPPORT FOR ICELAND'S
CAUSE IN SUCH FORUMS AS NATO AND UN; WORKING TO SAFEGUARD COUNTRY'S
INTERESTS AT UPCOMING LOS CONFERENCE; AND STRENGTHENING COAST
GUARD IN ORDER TO HINDER BRITISH FISHING. BEYOND THESE STEPS,
HALLGRIMSSON SAID, GOI WOULD MAINLY AWAIT RESULTS FROM LOS
CONFERENCE.

4. COMMERCE AND JUSTICE MINISTER JOHANNESSEN AND FONMIN AGUSTSSON
(PROGRESSIVE PARTY CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN RESPECTIVELY) ALSO
SPOKE FOR GOVERNMENT. AGUSTSSON STRESSED FISHERIES MATTER, WHICH HE
SAID GOVERNMENT HAD HANDLED WITH FORESIGHT AND FIRMNESS, CITING
DIPLOMATIC BREAK AS EVIDENCE TO WORLD OF SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH
ICELAND VIEWED MATTER. JOHANNESSEN FOCUSED ON ECONOMIC QUESTION,
DEFENDING GOVERNMENT'S PERFORMANCE UNDER DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES.
MARTIN

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